

# Malaysia saves endangered pygmy elephant on Borneo

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A pygmy elephant calf on Borneo island, in Malaysia's Sabah state. Malaysian wildlife authorities said they had rescued a pygmy elephant calf on Borneo island and expressed hope a planned sanctuary would provide protection for the endangered animals.

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The male calf, which is less than a month old, was pulled out of a deep moat surrounding a palm oil plantation in remote Sabah state on Friday, said Sen Nathan, a senior official with the Sabah Wildlife Department.

It is the fifth calf rescued by [wildlife officials](#) since 2009. Three of those previously saved have died but a female has recovered and is now at a [wildlife park](#).

There are fewer than 2,000 Borneo pygmy elephants left in the wild, according to authorities. A sub-species of the [Asian elephant](#), the creatures have a rounded appearance and are smaller than mainland elephants.



Wildlife officials take care of a pygmy elephant calf on Borneo island, in Malaysia's Sabah state. The male calf, which is less than a month old, was pulled out of a deep moat surrounding a palm oil plantation in remote Sabah state.

The latest rescued calf, which weighed about 50 kilograms (110 pounds), was in a serious condition, Nathan told AFP.

"He suffered severe dehydration and cuts and abrasions, probably while trying to get out of the moat," he said.

The elephant's mother was probably forced to leave it behind after the pair fell into the moat, and the calf likely spent more than a day there before being spotted by plantation workers, he said.

Nathan said a planned elephant sanctuary on 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres) of land within the 26,000-hectare Kinabatangan wildlife sanctuary in Sabah would help protect the animals.

The sanctuary would be able to house up to 60 injured elephants, as well as those found when they were too young to be reintroduced into the wild.

Authorities announced plans for the sanctuary earlier this month and want it open by the end of the year. "We really need this sanctuary," Nathan said.

The sanctuary will be funded with 5.3 million ringgit (\$1.7 million) from industry body the Malaysian Palm Oil Council and 1.5 million ringgit from NGO the Borneo Conservation Trust.

Wildlife activists warn that pygmy elephants are fast losing their natural habitat to deforestation and human encroachment on Borneo, a vast island shared by Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

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